

The Innis Herald

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The State of our Emergency Rooms

An Exposé by David Marchese

I don't pay a lot of attention to social issues. When I hear talk of cutbacks and budget deficits, my thoughts tend to turn towards pizza. But in spite of my political ignorance, I've noticed that topics relating to healthcare often inspire a lot of press. Recently, I had the chance to get some firsthand experience in the emergency room of a busy downtown hospital. I can't say that I cared much about healthcare issues before my hospital visit, and to be honest, I don't think anything's changed in that regard, but I do think there's some value in giving the public a firsthand account of the state of our healthcare system. This is my story.

How I Ended up in an Emergency Room

I was alone and bored in my apartment and desperate to liven things up a bit. So I decided to mix something with something else it probably shouldn't have been mixed with and then indulged in more of this concoction that I probably should not have indulged in. Having the freedom to do stuff like that is part of the fun of being 22 and living on your own, so don't judge me. Anyway, everything was cool and floaty. But at some point I thought I broke, or at least

seriously hurt, my jaw. This was confusing to me. I couldn't recall bumping into anything or banging myself, so I don't know how I could've hurt my jaw, but I was sure that something was seriously wrong. In actuality, my jaw was perfectly fine, but I didn't think so at the time and I decided the sensible thing to do was seek medical attention right away.

I Saw the Sign

I didn't know exactly where to find a doctor, but I remembered that there are a bunch of hospitals near the south side of campus, so I headed over there. Luckily, I live at the south edge of campus so my destination was pretty convenient. It can be really nice and thoughtful to walk alone at night, but it was a little chilly and I was only wearing pyjamas. I was also preoccupied with finding a hospital, so I didn't enjoy the walk as much as I normally would've. I'm not sure how long I wandered around, but eventually I saw a sign that said "Emergency" in big red letters and I went towards it. I'm glad the government sets aside money for large, well-lit emergency room signs. They really come in handy!

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Who's in Control?

Jehane Noujaim's *Control Room*

by Matthew Marshall

From the dry sands of the Middle East comes this thought-provoking and insightful documentary: *Control Room*, written and directed by Al Jazeera journalist Jehane Noujaim. Denounced by Donald Rumsfeld and proclaimed as the mouthpiece of Osama Bin Laden, the Arab television network Al Jazeera is frequently maligned in the West as a promoter of anti-Americanism. However, the truth is when the BBC closed its Arab division in the mid-90s, shortly thereafter all of the out-of-work BBC journalists formed Al Jazeera with the backing of a Qatar millionaire. *Control Room* briefly gives the viewer a glimpse of Al Jazeera's conception in 1996 and puts the network into its broader context: 40 million viewers in the Arab world, a reach and influence unparalleled by any other media source in this region. More importantly, *Control Room* follows Al Jazeera through the recent Iraq War.

Control Room takes the viewer behind the scenes at the biggest Arab television network and shows how Al Jazeera interprets and displays the news. Both interviews with Al Jazeera journalists and US military publicists are included, and this documen-

tary appears to try to strike a "fair and balanced" approach to the issue of reporting the war. Be clear, this is not a commentary on the quality or accuracy of the Al Jazeera network, but rather a commentary about *Control Room*, which is a documentary about Al Jazeera. In that sense, this was a truly refreshing documentary. While I enjoyed aspects of *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Michael Moore himself admits that it is not supposed to be objective; whereas in *Control Room* the filmmaker's attempts at objectivity are almost palpable.

For anyone who follows the news religiously, this film will not provide any revelatory or shocking facts, but it ties the facts together from an often neglected perspective, and this is explained by some of Al Jazeera's leading figures. Some of the most interesting and insightful commentary comes from Lt. Rush of the US military, a public relations officer stationed at the United States Central Command in Qatar during the war. *Control Room* shows the thoughtful musings of Lt. Rush towards Al Jazeera journalists and in part shows the evolution of his opinions and views during the war.

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Innis Herald. Community

Blowing Smoke: An Editorial on SAC's Recent Performance as Our Elected Council by Stephanie Silverman

My mother always told me to finish every job I started. Even if I knew that it was silly or I realized half-way through that it wasn't going to work out, she always insisted that I follow each project through. When I was growing up, this oversimplified worldview struck me as more annoying than logical, and there were many times when I betrayed the filial trust and dropped the metaphorical ball. I, however, was not the chosen representative for a community of budding academics currently numbering larger than most farming towns in Ontario. When I backed out of something, I was not embarrassing or letting down over 40,000 undergrads. In other words, this year's Students' Administrative Council (SAC) has so far been laughably half-assed in its project mismanagement, and it's a problem we all have to bear.

It should be acknowledged that most of the news that filters out of SAC's ivory tower is bad news, and that what we don't know of is probably all of the good and wonderful initiatives that our student council is enacting on our behalf. I am sure that on many issues the team headed by the inarguably wonderful Rini Ghosh has pulled through and shone a light to make us all beam. Yet there is the dreadful case of the Arts and Science Students' Union (ASSU) Anti-Calendar joke gone awry. Why would you publish "inside jokes" on the back of one of the most widely-read and highly-regarded publications on campus? Isn't the whole point of an "inside joke" to keep it within a select group of people, those being the only people who could truly "get it"? Instead of seeing a funny little rehash from the year we spent lovingly orchestrating the to-dos of the Arts and

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Herald Gets Boxes

Look for them in the College and Residence lobbies.



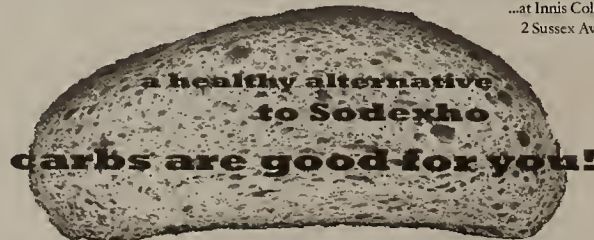
External Officer Jasmine Landau risks her health for Herald. No, we didn't steal the boxes from the Globe and Mail. The Globe gave them to our good friends at The Mike, who passed them on to us when they got new boxes. Just another way the Innis Herald remains one of the most frugal student newspapers in Canada (so says Canadian Universities Press administrator Chris Dunn).

They are complete and beautiful. So beautiful, in fact, that Jasmine, and film editor Joel Elliot get up close and personal.



The Innis Cafe

...at Innis College
2 Sussex Ave.



brutality and destruction are not*

*<http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk>

Innis Herald Visits the Frosh BBQ, September 7th



Herald Editor Katz cries for his children.



Sinisa and Donald of the Innis Registrar's Office love the Herald.
You should too.



Some friends at Rotman even joined in the Herald love-in.

Scientists Baffled as Harold Innis Found Alive "No Man Can Stop Me!" boasts political economist by Stephen Hutchison

Authorities, academics, and students were stunned by the apparent revelation yesterday that Harold Adams Innis, a legendary political economist thought to have died 52 years ago, is actually still alive. Reporters for the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Gargyle*, and the *Innis Herald* were on-hand to witness a press conference called by Innis at Innis College, a building at the University of Toronto named in honour of the thought-deceased U of T professor.

"I proclaim the universality of the Staples Thesis," Innis, whose appearance was virtually identical to the photograph featured in posters throughout the U of T campus, announced. "History since my 'death' has clearly demonstrated that the export of natural resources, or staples, from Canada to more advanced economies has a profound and defining effect upon the social and political structures of our country."

"Moreover," continued the author of *The Cod Fisheries* and *The Fur Trade*, "my earlier assertion that Canada's reliance upon the export of so-called staple goods has trapped her within that economic role internationally is shown by modern studies to be demonstrably true."

Innis then went on at great length to praise Innis College Principal Frank Cunningham, who was conspicuously absent from the press conference and could not be reached for comment until Innis had departed.

Within a few minutes of Innis's departure, however, Prof. Cunningham did appear to answer reporters' queries. "This truly is a pleasant surprise to all students of Canadian economic history and, indeed, all of Canada and the world," a visibly exultant Cunningham noted in the preamble to his statement. "I am thrilled at the prospect of implementing Mr. Innis's recommendations, and am humbled that he has seen fit to include me in his designs."

"Of particular importance and ingenuity, I believe," Cunningham added, distributing a list of proposals allegedly given to him by Innis, "is his suggestion of an immediate 200% salary increase for the Principal of Innis College, whom, he insists — rightly, I believe — should be chauffeured about campus in a 26-foot-long limousine to be called the 'P.I.M.P. mobile'." Cunningham then drew attention to Innis's ideas for a vastly enlarged Principal's Office, to be modeled on the French Palace of Versailles, a grandiose Roman amphitheatre to be built atop the Innis College, and a 97-foot tall statue of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, wearing a ten-gallon hat and bearing the inscription "*primus inter pares marcus brothersus*". Cunningham described the recommendations, respectively, as "enlightened," "indispensable," and "splendiferous".

When asked after the press conference to comment upon the persistent rumour that the "re-appearance" of Harold Innis was actually a pathetic and transparent ruse by Frank Cunningham, who conveniently stood to gain by all of Innis's recommendations, the avant-garde newspaper *Innis Herald* editor-in-chief Stephanie Silverman responded emphatically and unequivocally. "That's ridiculous," replied Silverman with incredulity. "Frank Cunningham wears glasses. Harold Innis doesn't. If Prof. Cunningham were Harold Innis then he wouldn't be able to see!"



Harold Innis: Political Economist and debonair



Leonard Elias: Social Rep and debonair

Innis College Student Society News

by Leonard Elias and Tim Walker

Hello fellow Innisians! To our new recruits, welcome aboard, and to our long-standing members, welcome back. The ICSS (Innis College Student Society) has a great year of fun events and attractions to pull students away from the occasional monotony of school and into the exciting realm of get-togethers, shin-digs and hullabaloes.

We, the two Social Reps for ICSS, Leonard Elias and Tim Walker, are as busy as bees (and we all know how busy bees are) getting this year organized. Fret not, for the constants from previous years, including the Innis College Formal, End-of-the-Year Party and various pub nights, will remain, but this time they will be accompanied by their new partners in social-ness including a One-Act Festival and the reappearance of the Innis College Fashion Show. In addition to all that, we've got a couple plans in the works to make sure that everyone has a great time. While we can't divulge any information about them yet (well, we could tell you, but then we'd have to kill you), we'll guarantee that info will be kept up-to-date on the ICSS board in the Innis College Pit — the sunken area with the green couches right by the main entrance of the college — and in the residence.

This year, we want to ensure that all sorts of Innis students come out to events. Whether you happen to be a frosh or an upper year, a residence dweller or commuter, we want to make sure that you come out and meet other Innisians. We will plan the events and publicize them, but you're the one who's going to put in the real effort by coming out and letting us entertain you. Once you get involved with the events, you may discover the other amazing people with whom you share your college. First-years may reacquire themselves with forgotten buddies from Frosh week. Upper years may discover the interesting and exciting new students that are now part of our college. All this can only happen if you help us out by taking the first step and coming out to our events.

ICSS will be holding elections for the First Year Representative at the end of September. If you are in first year and are interested in joining a council that serves the student body, helps speak for students and provides fun times for them, then this is the council for you. You'll have the opportunity to meet the exciting Innisians who put together Frosh Week and see the internal machinations that make ICSS so great. Here's to a great year, everyone! Any time you have questions, comments or just want to have a place to sit down and have a pop, stop by at the ICSS office, which is right by the café in Innis College. We'd love to meet you.

Excelsior!

Who's in Control?

...Continued from Front Page

Control Room is an intelligent and skillfully edited documentary. Regardless of political affiliation, or whether you agree or disagree with the views presented in the film, I think the most valuable aspect of this type of documentary is that they encourage

debate about an issue; talking about something is rarely a bad thing. Whether you are a news junkie or not, this is a documentary that adds a nuanced view-point to an issue that for a long period of time was ubiquitous in the mainstream media. Jehane Noujaim does a good job of showing a multitude of views and taking the viewer behind the cameras of Al Jazeera, but in the end it's all about perspective.



A Trip to Romania, A Trip to Remember by Alice Kim

Bordering the Black Sea, Romania is a country whose rich culture and beauty cannot be concealed by its economic disarray. Communist rule dominated Romania from 1947 through to 1990. During this period, draconian leaders, such as Nicolae Ceausescu, oppressed and induced much suffering upon the Romanian populace. Currently the Social Democratic Party governs Romania, and must address the lagging economic reforms, among other pressing concerns, before Romania can join the European Union. Romania was the 50th country to join Habitat for Humanity. There, the first Habitat site was located in the small western town of Beius in 1996, which is where I was fortunate enough to spend a couple weeks of my summer.

In Beius, I worked alongside my eleven teammates, who traveled a long way to Beius from the various regions within the United States. Upon our arrival to Beius our team

was put straight to work, mixing cement and laying the slab foundation for a new home. Our team, GV4467, also helped to put up a roof, did some interior painting,

and applied stucco, among other tasks. It was an honour to work alongside the Habitat crew in Beius; they were all very friendly, extremely patient, and dedicated to their work with Habitat. Despite the hardships that come with living in a post-communist, transition economy, Rottanians remain hopeful and determined to build houses, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, for families in need.

In this sense, the Romanian tradition of "claca", helping community members build their own houses, has taken a new form. This trip has taught me so much; words cannot describe all that I have experienced. This was definitely a trip to remember.



CINSSU Free Friday Films

von Sternberg, Marlene Dietrich, Donald Sutherland...
what more do you want?

Admit it: you're broke (if you aren't yet, you will be soon). With the Toronto International Film Festival over, the tuition paid and the books bought, your skimpy little wallet will appreciate anything FREE. The time is right to check out CINSSU's (the Cinema Studies Students' Union) Free Friday Films programme! There are free films at Innis every Friday. All screenings take place in Innis College Town Hall and begin at 7:00 pm (first come, first served). Stay tuned for other upcoming CINSSU events, such as the student mixer, grad seminar and sneak previews. New members are always welcome to join. The office: room 107 in Innis College. The site: www.utoronto.ca/hff P.S. A BIG thanks to everyone who voted 'yes' to our levy last semester!

October 8th (Sternberg/Dietrich Series)
The Blue Angel (1930)

Germany, directed by Josef von Sternberg, with Emil Jannings and Marlene Dietrich. 107min, 16mm. Immanuel Rath (Jannings) is merely an old single high school teacher, until he discovers that many of his students go to a variety club 'The Blue Angel' after school. He decides to take a look to remind any students he sees. Unfortunately for Immanuel he falls in love with Lola (Dietrich), a dancer at the Angel and their doomed romance runs like a hot fuse until the eventual destructive explosion.

October 15th (Sternberg/Dietrich Series)
Morocco (1930)

USA, directed by Josef von Sternberg with Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich. 91 min, 16mm. "The first Sternberg/Dietrich collaboration: a

delicate romance between a legionnaire and a woman with a past, set in a claustrophobic, studio-built Morocco. For all the melodramatic qualities of script and performances, it's also a perfectly realistic examination of the perils of



desire and an affirmation of l'amour fou, rooted deeply in emotional reality. Sternberg's direction is stunningly evocative, and Dietrich is sublime; the film also gives her one of her best cabaret numbers." — Alex Jacoby

October 22nd (Sternberg/Dietrich Series)
The Devil is a Woman (1935)

USA, directed by Josef von Sternberg, with Lionel Atwill and Marlene Dietrich. 79min, 16mm.

"Dietrich plays a Spanish femme fatale who comes between two friends in the last of her films with Sternberg. As in other Sternberg / Dietrich collaborations, the screen is bursting with the director's outrageous cinematic invention, which for all its artifice conjures into life the most powerful emotions. The lavish studio sets owe nothing to historical Spain and everything to a passionate, impulsive Iberia of the imagination, amid which dances Dietrich's face: a mask of desire and indifference, cruelty and lust, shadows and light." — SF Said

October 29th
Don't Look Now (1973)

Italy/UK, directed by Nicolaus Roeg, with Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland. 110min, 16mm.

"Sutherland and Christie are superbly understated as the bereaved couple trying to cope with the drowning of their daughter, by immersing themselves — perhaps illadvisedly — in a city of canals. They can't seem to get away from the lingering trauma of the event, which merges supernaturally with waming of future disaster. Elliptical and unforgettable, it's a defining filmic treatment of both Venice and marital love." — Tim Robey

All screenings at 7:00 PM in Innis College Town Hall - 2 Sussex Ave. (at St. George), north of Roberts Library. Admission is free. The FFF series is programmed by the Cinema Studies Student Union (CINSSU), funded in part by the Students Administrative Council and the Innis College Student Society, with space and equipment provided by Innis

ICSS City Mentorship Program

The ICSS is looking for University of Toronto students who want to volunteer three hours (or more) a week from (3:00pm – 5:30pm) to help staff a grade-school homework and study skills clinic in a Regent Park public school.

Responsibilities will include:

- Helping them with rudimentary math, English and study skills
- Building relationships with grade school children (between grades 3-8) and demystify university life to them

This is a great opportunity for you to:

- Be involved in a ground level organization of this new program
- Interact with children from the across the City of Toronto
- Develop valuable leadership and personal skills
- Receive recognition from both Innis College and Toronto public schools

U of T students from any program are welcome to join!

If you are interested, please come to the ICSS Office (Innis College, rm105) for more information or email: inniscollegestudentsociety@hotmail.com Also keep your eyes open for an information session on this new project.

Blowing Smoke: An Editorial on SAC's Recent Performance as Our Elected Council

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Science Students Union, the majority of us would only see a foul ad since the majority of us were not a part of the loving orchestration of the Arts and Science Students Union. Yes, this is not a problem that SAC started, but it does revolve around Rini and her status as a bright, intelligent female leader. I also think it's a more than a mere coincidence that a joke about an ASSU president's marital status appears on the back of an Anti-Calendar for the first time ever when that President goes on to become the first woman to take the helm of SAC in a decade. Now, there's been lots of backtracking about how no one thought this joke through and that it should never have happened; however, speaking from a rather unique vantage point of having published a student newspaper for over two years, I can attest that indeed a lot of thought must be put into every publication that bears the UoT imprint.

OK, but that was mainly a mess-up from the ASSU. What has SAC done lately? Well, what about the SAC-organized Marijuana Legalization Day of Action, aka the Pot March? Why is SAC even sticking their noses into this issue? It is not the right of our elected body of representatives to speak on our behalf on such

a contentious issue without so much as a survey or any other form of consultation. Marijuana is not a student issue. Things like, say, tuition and the administration are student issues. Why doesn't SAC initiate and fund marches to repeal government policy on these topics?

Well, fine, let us assume that we're all stereotypical academic-types who think that pot should be available to more people than those afflicted with chronic disease; is it still right to assume that we're all Left? The biggest ball to be dropped yet in this first wee bit of the academic year would have to be SAC's choice to sponsor a bus to head to New York City to protest the Republican National Convention. Without consulting us or even posting a notice that this decision was being mulled, our elected representatives spent \$1500 of our money on a bus for them and their friends to protest Bush and his friends. Do they really think that Dubya cares that some kids from Toronto don't like him? He doesn't care that half the world hates him, so why would SAC think that their bus would change anything? Furthermore, what does Bush have to do with us? I doubt that every American at our school or even conserva-

tive Canadian (news flash: there are tons of Conservatives in Canada) is anti-Bush and would have given assent to this misuse of our money. Moreover, if I feel this level of outrage despite my status as a dual citizen who is going through much trouble in order to proxy-vote my anti-Bush opinion to my former state government, I can only guess how pissed off Bush supporters on campus must be.

From another personal standpoint, the Herald barely has enough money to float through the year - it's not our choice to publish only once a month - and so we would have

definitely appreciated that money more than Bush could have possibly cared that our small contingent was shaking a collective fist at him.

It's not just us, however: many clubs and even student programs have had to shut down from lack of funding over the past few years so please SAC think more wisely about our money. Beyond money, this whole affair is simply the climax of a series of embarrassing incidents that make me sad to be grouped as a "student leader" at this school. To continue the now-tired metaphor to its

completion as my mother always told me to do, the ball hasn't rolled too far away, SAC; you can still pick it up.



Construction Blues

by Jasmine Landau

September is here! School is in session! I can just smell the fresh scent of new textbooks, old lockers, and... concrete? I don't know about the rest of you, but I've been running around campus for my various school and non-school activities and all I see is construction. Bricks strewn across the sidewalk, warning signs unhinged, balding men yelling into walkie-talkies and wiping sweat from under hardhats are daily fare. As a student here, it's come to be a familiar sight.

From OISE and the Woodsworth Residence at the north end of campus to Taddle Creek and Tanz Neurosci in the south, there are over 10 buildings at the U of T getting facelifts with our tuition money. It makes me think of this comedian who said there are two seasons in Canada: winter, and construction. Sid Smith is *still* under renovations after more than a year of drills, barricades and sawdust. It's understandable that they want the merely thirty-something building to look its best, but one has to question exactly how efficient they're being if it's taking this long. I can recall summer school last year, and how loudly the teacher had to yell over the jackhammers to tell us about the construction of the Palace at Versailles. It was ironic, almost.

I'm saddened to say that it's worse still on the com-

puter campuses. I went to UTM for my first year, and endured awkward construction of a new residence building between the North and South buildings that narrowed the 5-Minute-Walk to the point of waiting 15 minutes to get past oncoming strangers in single-file. Also, they were bulldozing and re-paving a part of a parking lot to accommodate more commuters' gas-guzzling SUVs. I went back recently to find that they had *removed* the beautiful hill at the side of the South building and that there are yet more fix-ups to the other parking lot.

With such hefty construction comes numerous problems. Noise pollution, obstruction of pathways, airborne dust and concrete particles are a few, not to mention it's just plain *unsightly*. I argue that these endeavours should be finished as fast as possible so that we don't have to endure the sight of dirty men labouring over bare girders and broken cinder blocks. I'm tired of having to change my route to avoid the eyesore that is campus construction.

The big question to pose is this: will it ever end? Will we ever be able to traverse the University of Toronto's fine campus and admire its architectural beauty without tearing up from the asbestos? Who knows. Just don't forget your hardhat on the way to class today.



What Happened to My He-Man?

by Matthew Lau

When I was young, I watched a lot of He-Man. Good times. He-Man was straightforward and simple: By the power of Greyskull, I have the power; Whoop some ass; Victory. Leaving me with enough good feelings to last till the next episode.

I loved He-Man.

He-Man represented TV when TV was good. When I could sit down after a day of being picked on at school, and know that no matter how bad things get, there would always still be Skeletor. It was my refuge from the harsh realities of this world: on He-Man, good guys win,

bad guys lose. It all works out. With a swing of my sword, I could conquer evil. Dominion was always mine; I was, after all, He-Man. Master of the Universe. Mu-Ha-Ha-Ha.

They don't give us He-Mans on TV anymore. Instead, TV nowadays are filled with what we have come to know as reality shows. Shows that depict the very nature of our world. With real people, real situations, real circumstances, and real-

time decisions. This way, when you're watching the show, you get a taste of what it would be like to be... you know, *not* watching TV at all.

We snatch people off the streets, cram them in a house, and watch with irresistible excitement as they engage in such captivating and dramatic affairs such as arguments, conflicts, romance, and friendship. Everyday socializing, you say? Nope, now we call it "Big Brother".

We offer money as reward, then sit back with great amusement as people let their greed lead them to do such things as diving naked into a pool of cockroaches while munching on boiled buffalo testicles. Jerks, you say? We now call it "Fear Factor".

We separate couples, put them on different islands crowded with hordes of scantily-clad members of the opposite sex, force them to go on private dates, then gasp with surprise as they begin to cheat on each other. Duh, you say? Now it's called "Temptation Island".

The most puzzling thing about reality TV shows is that even the very notion of it seems to be awfully absurd. If reality is what we really want, why watch TV at all? Surely conflicts, relationships, greed, temptations are all features that are common – if anything, a little too common – to our everyday lives; Why, then, should we bother paying cable companies for them?

If, on the other hand, we are looking for something a little more unusual, if we are hoping that by putting people on television they would behave a little differently, with a little more dramatic flare, then reality TV shows seem to be an equally poor option: why not just adopt real sit-coms and dramatic series altogether, giving us all the flare we'd ever need? Instead, we have chosen to stick with substandard acting by amateur performers and plotlines that look like they came straight out of a reject sit-com. Peculiar, isn't it?

Some may say that reality TV shows offer exactly what He-Man gave me: a refuge, an escape. If that is true, however, the implications are even more frightening. If a fantasy in which good always conquers evil reflects a reality that serves up the opposite, what would a fantasy of normal, everyday social interaction suggest? Have we become so lonely, so isolated, and so socially starved, that we now need

to watch people interact on television as an escape? And, more importantly, as we devote more and more time and attention into these shows, what is going to save us from being lonelier, more isolated, and more socially starved than ever?

It seems to have become a common practice – at least among people I know – to watch a reality TV show and identify, as well as poke fun at, those who are particularly anti-social or just unequipped for regular social interactions.

At least someone is helping them see it.

Who is going to help us?

The State of our Emergency Rooms

...Continued from Front Page

Of TV and SARS

I walked through the emergency room doors and into the waiting room. It was empty and no one was at the desk, so I just stood there for a while. The room was very clean and there was a TV on. Kudos again, government, for the cleanliness of the room. I started to feel sterile just being in the waiting room. But if I may, would it be too much to get more than basic cable for the waiting room TV? People in the waiting room of an emergency room need something to soothe their frazzled nerves. Often, an appropriate brain tonic can't be found on basic cable, where there's hardly ever any nudity.

Anyway, I was still standing confusedly in the waiting room when three guys who I took for ambulance drivers told me I had to go back outside and fill out a communicable diseases form. I went back to the entrance and sure enough there was a sign telling me to fill out a form. I was too discombobulated to do much reading, so I just checked off all the "no" boxes, figuring that was the safest bet. I didn't have SARS, so I wasn't worried. While I filled out the form I could have sworn the ambulance drivers were laughing at me. Maybe I looked goofy in my pyjamas, but perhaps a little sensitivity training is in order for our emergency healthcare workers. Are you listening, Mr. McGuinty?

You never know who you'll meet in the ER

I came back in and brought the filled-out form to the nurse who was now sitting behind the desk. She took the form and swiped my OHIP card and told me to take a seat. I sat there for a while watching a Letterman rerun, until a dude and some girl came in. The girl sat down near me and the dude went to the desk. They were worried that she might be pregnant. When the guy came to sit down, I got a look at him and I was pretty sure it was this guy I knew from high school who had had designs on a lady I was into at the time. I wasn't sure if he recognized me. Sitting there in my stupor and my PJs, I didn't feel like catching up with old romantic rivals. I can see how in some cases, the worst thing about being in the ER would be awkward social encounters. Perhaps a think tank could be assembled to combat this problem.

All's Well that Ends Well

The nurse called my name and led me into another room. She asked me what the problem was and I told her. She seemed skeptical, which was perfectly reasonable. She asked me a couple of questions and then led me into another room. She told me the doctor would be there soon. It couldn't have been less of 5 minutes before the doctor showed up. Prompt and punctual service; behold your hard-earned tax dollars at work! Fortunately or unfortunately, by this time I had realized that my jaw wasn't broken and that I was fine. The doctor sensed this and gently told me that ingesting certain things can impair judgement and that I should take it easy for a day. He even skillfully deflected my clever pleas for a painkiller. As a parting gift, I was given a colorful paper bracelet. That's pretty much all the experience I have with emergency rooms. But I think that it's enough to say that except for a little tweaking, our healthcare system is in good shape!

Ching-Ching: Cashing in For The Last Time

Joshua Pineda reviews the Anniversary Re-Issue of Ready to Die

I must confess, I haven't been inside a CD store for a while. So when I saw that Bad Boy had reissued Biggie Small's first (and best) album *Ready to Die*, I had to review it even though this 2-disc package has been on the shelf for more than a month. This album is classic and the thought of getting a new copy, with additional tracks, music videos, and a live performance for only \$14.99 seemed too good to be true. I should be more optimistic sometimes because this package is a great buy.

If you haven't heard *Ready to Die* yet you really should. Not because it's important, or a big part of the history of hip-hop. You should listen to this album because it's fucking good.

Despite what rabid 2Pac fans might say, Biggie's the best MC of all time. Any arguments you hear for Pac seem to focus more on the fact that 2Pac "said something real" and gloss over the fact that rhyme for rhyme, Biggie was a better MC. As far as verbal gymnastics go, Biggie was the king, and *Ready to Die* was his best work (and timeless because lines like "You looked so good/ I'd suck on your Daddy's dick" re-

ally don't ever get old). Every rhyme on this album is killer, and Biggie hits every single one of his beats (which are all still hot 10 years later). The really amazing thing about Biggie is his ability to flip the script from track to track. In "Gimme the Loot," he's cheerfully robbing pregnant women. Then, merely a few tracks later, he's giving one of the realest accounts of urban poverty in "Everyday Struggles". This is the best album in the history of hip-hop, period.

As far as the extra stuff goes the extra tracks are exactly what you'd want on a re-issue. Unreleased radio hits "Who Shot Ya" (the track that pissed Pac off so much in prison) and "Just Playin'" are the tracks you wish you had on your old copy of *Ready to Die*. The DVD features all the videos made for the album including the "One More Chance" remix (which unfortunately wasn't included on the audio CD) and seldom seen "Warning" video (a must-see just because it features the worst gun fight scene in cinematic history). The live performance of "Unbelievable" is a little disappointing because it looks like it was shot on a handcam and features Puff Daddy as the worst hype man ever.

If you didn't pick this up back in Bad Boy's glory days (before Daddy became Diddy, before the shiny



suits, before fucking Loon and Mario Winans), this album is a must-have. If you did pick this up in Bad Boy's glory days (before the Mohawks, before ripping 112 off like they were Craig Mack, before Da Band) then your copy's probably so fucked up you need a new one anyway. In either case, buy this. Then maybe Diddy can afford to pay his artists again ... or buy a tiger ... or get a haircut ...

* Incidentally if I hear this argument coming out of someone's mouth I might just hit that person. It's stupid. Have you ever thought the politics of "Thug Life" through to the end. It seems like a good idea but

the notorious



ready to die

>> Review: Björk - Medúlla

by Qing Hua Wang

Björk's latest album, *Medúlla*, is arguably the least accessible of her releases, with its focus on all manner of vocal sounds from soaring melodies to guttural growls. But because it is stripped of any traditional reliance on instruments, it is perhaps a truer reflection of Björk's identity as an artist and brilliantly showcases her abilities as a singer.

This album is a celebration of the human voice. Björk's distinctive croon is heard in all the tracks, sometimes shining a *cappella* like in "Show Me Forgiveness", and at other times surrounded by choirs and beat-boxers. Björk's accompanying 'instruments' in this album are her contributors, making use of their vocal talents - from The Icelandic Choir, Inuit throat singer Tagaq, to Robert Wyatt, Mike Patton, and beat-boxers Rahzel and Dokaka - with sampling and editing from Matmos, Mark "Spice" Stent, and Mark Bell. Maybe it's a bit ironic that many of the effects produced by the beat-boxers are in imitation of instrumental sounds, but they have a different, more unfined and more interesting feel than what is generated by actual instruments.

Medúlla opens with the lush "Pleasure is All Mine", a track beginning and ending in plaintive sighs and wails, and entwined in the middle with luxuriant melodies. "Where Is the Line" is one of the album's most difficult tracks, with many harsh voices asking - even demanding - "where is the line with you?" Beyond the stridency of the vocals, however, lurk densely layered and carefully structured sounds.

"Vökuro" is one of two tracks on *Medúlla* sung in Björk's native Icelandic, accompanied by the Icelandic Choir.

Björk turns the sounds of the Icelandic tongue into musical ornaments - the rolled R's into trills, the consonants into grace notes. "Öl Birtan" is the other Icelandic track, and features several versions of Björk's voice overlapped in a round-like song. "Vökuro" is one of the most immediately accessible tracks, but is merely a simple precursor to the intricate and surprising details to be found on other tracks.

"Oceania" was composed for the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics, and is also the first single from the album. It features ethereal vocal glissandos performed by a choir accompanying Björk's singing. Beat-boxed bass notes, clicks, and pops provide the grounding in this track. In one of the album's catchiest tracks, "Who Is It", Björk's singing is again central, this time supported by vocal effects that sound at times like flutes, at others like birds, and at others, even like human voices. On this album, it's often difficult to be sure which voice or what effect created the sounds being heard.

Near the end of the album, "Miðvikudags" reprises a simple two-note theme first heard in "Öl Birtan", this time as one of several intertwined threads soaring towards a quiet ending. The up-tempo closing track "Triumph of a Heart" features the unusual yet oddly catchy sounds of Japanese beat-box artist Dokaka.

Medúlla is distinctly unlike Björk's other albums, but at the same time follows in the same veins of creative exploration. The human voice is elevated to unexpected heights, performing nuanced and singular feats. It may take a while for the sounds of *Medúlla* to seep into your mind as you listen, but time spent with this album is ultimately very rewarding and enjoyable. This is an engrossing, challenging album from an enigmatic and remarkably inventive artist.



Ryan's Recent Release Round-Up by Ryan Hardy

Libertines s/t The best story of all in music is the redemption story, the return of the fallen icon. It's probably so universally loved because it doesn't happen very often. When musicians go bad, they tend to stay that way, with a few exceptions: Dylan, Bowie (well, if you liked *Black Tie White Noise*), Paul Weller, Johnny Cash and, in a way, The Pixies. When these exceptions loved, the results are so often magical, they are a reward to the faithful and a glorious dig at the naysayers. That Mick Jones went comically, depressingly bad in the eighties is well known, but few seem to realize that Jones is back to firm up his place in rock n' roll heaven. Enter the Libertines, a band that doesn't resemble The Clash nearly as much as the British press would have you believe (the dynamic is far more Glimmer Twins than Strummer/Jones). If you don't know yet, Mick Jones produced this album, the Libertines' sophomore record, and it is a fucking smash. How many other albums have come out in recent years that reference show tunes, Oscar Wilde, Rudyard Kipling, Auschwitz, gangsta rap, homoeroticism and, well, The Clash? None, damnit. If that isn't enough, consider that the Libertines are being managed by Alan McGee. That's right, the Libertines are the bridge between Oasis and The Clash. If that fact won't make you cop this, will anything?

Comets On Fire Blue Cathedral Wow, they sure do sound like a bunch of crazy dudes. If the nonsensical band-name didn't clue you in, the song titles sure will. I mean, two different songs contain the word "whiskey" in their titles. I'm sorry, but I had kind of hoped we'd all learned a lesson from the horrifying implosion of Ryan Adams: writing songs about the rock and roll lifestyle isn't the same thing as actually making music that rocks. You can scream your head off, you can come on like a zombified Lynyrd Skynyrd, you can have a lot of weird solos (guitar, keyboards AND sax!) and, well, you can be on SubPop. You can have all that and still not be a good band, because if you're Comets On Fire, that's all you've got and all the style and madman bullshit don't go far without some good songs.

Junior Boys Last Exit A while ago I was at a party and saw two friends of mine almost come to blows over the question of whether Toronto has a good ... Continued on Page 9

Tinnitus:

Sensation of a ringing, roaring or buzzing sound in the ears or head

by Lindsay Zier-Vogel

And under a small circle of tight skin,
bees, angry bees whose angry Queen
roars her declarations,
casting echos against the busy bellies of
her drones
who do not whisper in response,
but raise their winged voices to an
answering scream.

And, under a small circle of tight skin,
bees, whose angry honey is not sweet.

the two lonely pines beside by Olaf Brave

It's March
and I realize how much I miss
a cool
softly shimmering rain

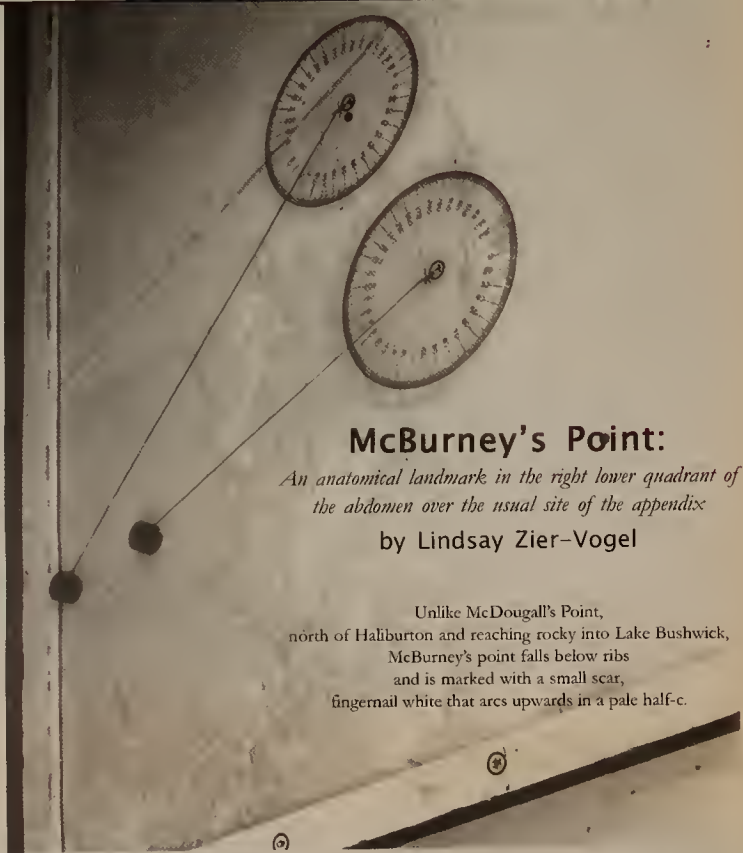
Winter's memory is long but faded
frozen into place
by shivering limbs
stinging winds against faces
snow — hovering beautiful
but then a mess of exhaust and oil and dirt
marring

Spring brings something long forgotten now
thawed
rain hums on my face
the air thick with humidity
fresh with Nature

I stand between the two lonely pines beside
the library at the end of the street

breathing
listening

my pen, with Spring, again waking



McBurney's Point:

An anatomical landmark in the right lower quadrant of the abdomen over the usual site of the appendix

by Lindsay Zier-Vogel

Unlike McDougall's Point,
north of Haliburton and reaching rocky into Lake Bushwick,
McBurney's point falls below ribs
and is marked with a small scar,
fingernail white that arcs upwards in a pale half-c.

Baudelaire by Josh Pineda

He thirsted for that milk
Languorous & honey-scented
That sweet opiate hidden
Deep in the recesses of language
Is it magic?? wonder?? contempt??
Or those thoughts distilled
Grown rich, corrupt, profound
Like myrrh or musk
Or visions of seraphs, descending,
Dark-haired with flashing eyes,
Bearing with them plates of honeydew
And the milk of paradise

From the Mouths of Babes by Josh Pineda

I'm afraid -
My feminine side has gone mad

She strips me bare
Against bathroom tiles
And rides me
Barebacked and brittle-boned
(She's a frail thing)
The scent of ammonia
A faint reminder
Of that night's enforced consumption

- after 9 months under her heart
I emerge; oedipal, tragic -
Deceived/Conceived
A victim of my own mis(conception)s

The Death of Hip-Hop: What Are You Saving, Honestly?

by Joshua Pineda

I had a profoundly surreal experience the other day. In a recent conversation with a friend I found out that the peeps from Epitaph really feel that Slug (the MC) from Atmosphere is going to be the one to "save hip-hop". After pausing to reflect, I was struck by how surreal it seemed that a middle class lit-nerd from Scarborough was being told by an indie-rock girl that the people from a label known almost exclusively for its punk releases believed a slightly above average MC, whose rhymes are almost exclusively about getting dumped, is going to be the one to "save hip-hop".

This little conversation led to two realizations: First, in our culture hip-hop is something that has definitely become communal property; second, the death of hip-hop is something that has been overly discussed, and, in my opinion, beat to death. Cats have been pointing to a decline in hip-hop music and culture for a loooooong time. From DJ Shadow's "Why Hip-Hop Sucks in '96", Common's "I used to love H.E.R." to the very recent "Throwback Mix" from Brassmunk, G-Stokes, and Graph Nobel, heads have been pronouncing death sentences on hip-hop while harking back to some supposed golden age. Every head's got his favourite era in hip-hop, whether it was Sugarhill Gang, Juice Crew, or Native Tongues. For me it was New York, '95, when it was all about cats talking bout jacking youths and slanging cain. But whatever time they point back to, it was a time when hip-hop was pure and all about the fun, a time before the Benzes, birds, and bling.

The loudest proponents of this golden age utopianism and the accompanying "death of hip-hop" mentality seem to be music critics who point to the huge record sales of artists like 50 cent, Nelly, Jay-Z, Chingy etc. etc. and the lack of record sales and publicity given to forward thinking crews like the Frisco's Quannum collective, Def Jux, J-Live, and Madlib. If you listen to these heads talk, the lack of acts with "substance" (i.e. socially conscious rhymes) and the success of (forgive the overused term) gangsta rap are the causes/results of a declining hip-hop culture that's forgotten its history and is being co-opted by middle class white kids hungry for rhymes about ice, rocks, and hoers.

What these "conscious heads" don't realize is that hip-hop is incredibly fucking successful. The big names are going platinum in like a week and the littler heads, although less suc-

cessful, are making records and seeing their names in print. So what if the crap gets to the top of the charts a lot of the time. The music consuming population likes crap. They like shitty records with no substance and they like tales from the hood. And for Christ's sake, the crap's pretty good a lot of the time. Jigga and 50 can rock the mic, and even Chingy's kinda fun to listen to if you're at a club or something.

What's really killing hip-hop is how loud a voice the music snobs get. You say something enough and people start

to believe it. And the "hip-hop's dead" mentality results in some incredibly fucking stupid behaviour. Stupid shit like KRS-One opening a temple of hip-hop in New York and Puffy bitching at his band about how they don't know the words to "Rapper's Delight" (apparently despite the Liza Minnelli covers, Diddy's still straight hip-hop). The artificially created need to "keep it real" and know about the roots of hip-hop culture and the desire for authenticity that makes people "have" to listen to Kool Here and Grandmaster Flash before they can really be "hip-hop" is taking the fun out of the music. I don't want to have to fucking study to like Nas, and I don't want to have to have a social conscience to listen to talk

about the Kanye West CD. Getting a "soul education"™ sucks the fun out of listening to records. Hip-hop's appeal is its accessibility. It's the accessibility of the music that brought it to this middle-class lit-nerd from Scarborough. So if you want to go back to when hip-hop was fun all you have to do is take back the music from the music snobs. Don't feel bad if you just got into hip-hop in university, or if you don't know who Big Daddy Kane is. And the next time someone says that so-and-so is gonna save hip-hop, ask them exactly what the fuck so-and-so's saving, honestly.

* As a side note, the link between the desire to validate hip-hop, either by giving it a "history" to be learned, or by making hip-hop a necessarily "political" form of expression, seems to stem from a desire to legitimate hip-hop music in the eyes of a group of people (i.e. academics, old-school music critics etc.) who wouldn't fucking get the music anyway. All this seems to

be a defensive response to accusations made in previous decades that hip-hop was a flash in the pan trend. In other words "keeping it real" is an expression of cultural insecurity that seems weird considering the cultural purchase that hip-hop (as music, culture, style) possesses now a days. Hip-hop does not get validated by handing it over to the Marxists, militant vegans, Black Panthers, etc. So get a grip motherfucker.

ENSU "Mixer"

Abhhh! Another year at U of T has begun... gone are the days of sleeping in, watching television and lazing about with no worries about something that's due tomorrow. On the bright side, it is another year of social events, meeting new people, and learning. My name is Keri Baxter and I am the third year representative for ENSU. According to Matt Niedelski (who is the Coordinator of ENSU for the 2004-2005 school year), I am the "lucky person" who will be keeping all Innis Herald readers up-to-date on the 'goings-on' of ENSU.

For those of you who aren't familiar, ENSU stands for the Environmental Student's Union. It is a student-run organization that seeks to promote environmental activism both on campus and within the city. ENSU has organized several important initiatives to help "green" U of T along with fellow environmental organizations such as OPRIG (Ontario Public Interest Research Group) and UTERN (University of Toronto Environmental Resource Network).

This month I am going to keep this piece short and simply inform you of a get-together ENSU is going to be co-hosting with Innis College and the Division of the Environment called "The Mixer". It will be on September 29th and while its purpose is mainly to welcome first-year students and encourage them to get involved in the volunteer community, it is also to fill the remaining executive positions at ENSU! Those who are interested can obtain an application from the website (<http://www.utoronto.ca/envstudy/ensu/>) and drop them off in the mailbox outside the ENSU office, which is located at 2 Sussex Ave. It should be lots of fun so come on out. There will be great food and music and it's an awesome opportunity to meet other students in similar programs. I'll be sure to have a more thorough report on upcoming activities and interesting matters in the following issues to keep you all interested in ENSU - I promise!

Until then...

...Ryan's Recent Release Round-up continued from Pg. 7

"scene" or not. At the time I was on the fence, but *Last Exit* settled it for me. These boys are from Hamilton, people. And they just dusted pretty much everything to come out of Toronto since... *The Trinity Session*? We're all used to being second fiddle to Montreal, but now Hamilton is kicking our ass in a non-Grey Cup situation? Yikes. Some irate Torontonians may ask why this album is so goddamn good. Well, only because this album is like a frigging "The future of Caucasian dance-pop for Dummies" manual. The Junior Boys are getting compared to New Order, Japan, Timbaland, Basic Channel and, by me at least, Hall and Oates and the young Prince. The comparisons are deserved, but they only tell part of the story because nothing else really sounds as seamless or as forward-looking as *Last Exit* does. Back in 1980, a little man named Prince released a little album called *Dirty Mind* which didn't sell well but still basically told everybody what black pop was going to sound like for the next decade or so. One imagines that the lucky souls who bought that album all felt pretty smug around the time *Purple Rain* hit theatres and record stores. Buy *Last Exit*, and you'll probably wind up feeling the same way a few years from now.

PJ Harvey *Uh Huh Her* Speaking of redemption: is Polly Jane Harvey back? Maybe. *Uh Huh Her* is definitely the best thing she's done in a long while, and taken on its own merits, it's a good album. But look at the article you're reading: Junior Boys, Libertines, Femme Generation... PJ Harvey? It seems impossible to deny that PJ Harvey is a musician of a very different era. The other icons of that era, for example, Smashing Pumpkins, Oasis, Blur, Pulp, Beck etc. have all faded into obscurity, some badly (Pumpkins, Oasis) and some well (Beck). By contrast, Harvey just keeps on doin' her thang. Admirable though it may be, it's also the real issue I have with *Uh Huh Her*. Can an album this profoundly out of step with the times still be an important release, or just a treat for a small fan-base? It remains to be seen, then, whether PJ Harvey can still engage with the kids, like,

say, Bjork, or whether she can just cater to a devoted cult, à la Kate Bush.

Femme Generation Circle Gets The Square: I just trashed these guys in a rival publication, and then I saw them playing on, of all places, King's College Circle. It made me feel kind of bad for a second, because I wondered if maybe my scathing review had reduced them to playing U of T SAC Clubs Day. Probably not. As for the album, it answers the question we've all been asking ourselves, since 2002: "What if Hot Hot Heat were Canadian?" They are? Oh. Somebody give Femme Generation a call.

The Fiery Furnaces *Blueberry Boat*: I'm of the opinion that Mike Skinner is probably the single most important and interesting cat making music today, and I also feel that the title of one of his songs, "Let's Push Things Forward" identifies the main problem for today's quality musicians. That is the problem of trying to do something new, worthwhile, and listenable in a creatively Balkanized, grossly oversaturated marketplace. Genuinely "new" music seems pretty hard to find. But, hey, at least the Fiery Furnaces are coming with it. *Blueberry Boat* is an exciting record, because it constantly flirts with going too far into unlistenable and/or gratingly whimsical territory, but never does. It's not easy-listening: the Friedberger siblings, who appear to be a classically idiosyncratic brother-sister duo with a language entirely their own, are making music for themselves, although you can follow along. *Blueberry Boat* is that rare bird amongst recent releases-a difficult, challenging listen that will tantalize you with the prospect of finally "getting" it. I'm not sure I have, but I'm still listening to it and that's more than I can say for the new Sonic Youth.

Hate List 2: Hate 'em High, Hate 'em Low by Steffi Daft

I've been told that I am, as they say, a hata. I hate on everything: food, stores, cities, politics, and, most passionately, music and the arts. I prefer to think of myself as a harsh critic whose opinion should be valued if only because praise is so frugally divvied out. With that brief intro to my school of two-penny critics' philosophy proffered, I herewith present the second installment of The Hate List. Based on the precepts that everyone can dole out positive feedback but the negative ones are sometimes more important, The Hate List is a rating system based on how much something sucks. The

ultimate suck rating is 4 "☹" and so the ideal record or play

would receive 0 "☺". Need an example? Well, most people would agree that Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen's movie, *New York Minute*, is pretty bad, even hate-worthy, so it'd receive a rating of ☹☹☹☹. On the other hand, *Adaptation* is pretty great so the Kaufman epic would receive a 0 to symbolically replace the absence of any ☹. Ipso facto, the aim is to

have as few ☹ as possible. This list is different from the last one because it covers different things. It is also focusing on end-of-summer events that if you weren't at, you'll have to wait at least another year to attend, and singles that have cultural impact if they seem only annoying at first. Enjoy!

Broken Social Scene / Hidden Cameras at Harbourfront Part of the Gobsmacked Festival on August 28/29 for FREE 0.

The Toronto music scene is notoriously close-knit. Sometimes this love-fest overwhelms to the point where it seems inimical to a free-flow development of musical ideas; other times, however, the overlap of personal and musical relationships produces moments of beauty. Moments such as

on the fruits of our musical harvest and left satisfied and satiated.

The Hidden Cameras' set the next night was equally entertaining but in a different way altogether. This is another conglomerate band — featuring members of Gentleman Reg, Les Mouches, and dancing gimps in masks — but where BSS is known for layered and experimental soft rock, the HC showcases upbeat and extremely gay-positive choral rock. Their live show is definitely not as tight as that performed previously by the BSS, but lead singer Joel Gibb comes across as earnest and heartfelt about not only his own music but also our reactions to it.

A strange difference between the two shows was that, while the music of HC is invariably more "fun" — it actively encourages handclapping, foot-stomping and tons of booty shaking to form part of the actual beats of the songs — those present at BSS were way more into the music. Maybe only the stalwart fans stuck out the crowds at BSS, maybe the weather was nicer, the HC are not as infectious as I believe, but people should have gotten up and danced more like they did at BSS. This festival was an awesome opportunity to see two

of the pioneers of the modern musical collectives for which Toronto has become known internationally, since it was open-air, informal, and free. The bands played the Harbourfront because of what Toronto means to them, and it's about time that more people discover what they mean to us.

"Fake-Prom" at Sneaky Dees, August 29th 5

Imagine all of the kids you hated in high school are gone. Replaced are other kids who you don't know and hipsters who don't care about you. That leaves you and your friends to dress up, get excited for Soundgarden and NIN, drink legally, and dance the night away. Fake-Prom is an annual party thrown in the upstairs section of Sneaky Dees and this year's theme was "Under the Sea". What will it be next year?

You should be there!

Dashboard Confessional — "Vindicated" ☹☹

I am not sure how but there is a link between the one-man band, Dashboard Confessional, and the television show, "The OC", and it has all culminated in straight, white men wearing tank tops and wrist bands. These boys with floppy hair are not the result of some hybrid metrosexual societal malfunction because they are actually the perverse progeny of Dashboard. Why? The radio announcer was announcing "Vindicated" with the words: "First Dashboard Confessional and then the latest hockey scores." In the old days, emo-kids did not play or follow hockey; they stayed in their rooms and moped and wrote in their livejournals. Now, with the wonderfully melodramatic, California rich kids on "The OC"

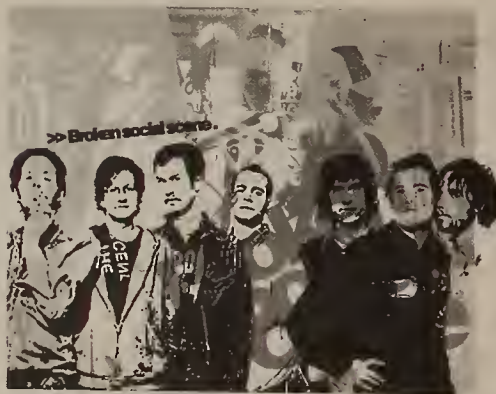
dropping references to Death Cab for Cutie and the show's producers using a Phantom Planet song as the theme, and "Vindicated" being used as a Spiderman ditty, emo has taken its place in theme-land. It has also become associated (even more so) with white kids with white kids' problems, and thus

this genre has moved from sidelines to soundtrack, and we have Dashboard and hockey together at last.

Avril Lavigne — "My Happy Ending" ☹

Avril Lavigne is the new Courtney Love: you can tell whom she's been hanging around with because her new songs smack of her companions' personal musical styles. Love's breakthrough albums with her band Hole, *Doll Parts* and *Live Through This*, sound mysteriously like anything/everything off of Nirvana's *Live from New York City* retrospective album. After Love's husband and Nirvana front man Kurt Cobain died, she started hanging out with the illustrious Billy Corgan. It was never

confirmed if these two were more than just friends but they were certainly together a lot — in fact, it was Corgan who recommended his Canadian friend, Melissa auf der Mar, to step in as Hole's new bassist after the old one OD'd. After Love and Corgan got close, Hole released *Celebrity Skin* in 1998. This album is reminiscent of the work produced by Corgan through both his band, the Smashing Pumpkins circa *Adore* or 1979, and his later side project, Zwan. Sadly, poor Miss Love is no longer chummy with Corgan and has alienated most of the punk/post-punk scene so her music is sucky and her public antics desperate. Avril is in not quite so desperate straits as is but her pattern is nonetheless similar and leaves room for worry: she worked extensively with the songwriting duo, The Matrix, who crafted her such superb pop hits as "Complicated" and "I'm with You". These worldwide hits follow the same catchy goodness of other Matrix creations like Lillix's one hit and all of the new Liz Phair album that was definitely not a hit. Now, Avril has "broken free" and "gone Goth and independent" which, in this case, means hanging out with Chantal Kreviazuk. It also means that our fair Chantal wrote "My Happy Ending" but gave it to Avril instead of performing it herself. The moral of this story is thus, don't hate on "My Happy Ending" because you can justify your love for this song in the same way that you can love Hole's "Malibu" or "Miss World".



Broken Social Scene's widely hailed debut, *You Forgot It In People*, or the Hidden Cameras' *The Smell of our Own*. So it was therefore fitting that the set that BSS performed on Harbourfront's open-air stage at the end of summer was peppered with references to all their "friends" who were onstage, offstage, and in the audience of over 2000 (my guess, wink wink). In case you are unfamiliar with these underground darlings, BSS is composed of members of Metric, Stars, Do Make Say Think, Microgroove, Raising the Fawn, By Divine Right, and more — there is a handy map detailing all of their connections on the website for their label, Arts and Crafts. Spanning their collected works and improvising a bit with new material written especially for that night, BSS performed a loving and laidback set for an adoring audience. It was a veritable Toronto music scene orgy whereby we feasted

A Ray of Light: Best Bets for Upcoming Concerts in October and Early November

- October 1st — The Arcade Fire at Lee's Palace
- October 8th — Billy Talent, Metric, Death from Above 1979 — The Docks
- October 10th — The Faint with TV on the Radio at Lee's Palace
- October 13th — Coheed and Cambria — Kool Haas
- October 13th — McLuskey — Lee's Palace
- October 14th — Neil Hamburger — El Mocambo
- October 15th — PJ Harvey — Phoenix Concert Theatre
- October 17th — Juana Molina at the Drake Hotel
- October 23rd — And You Will Know Us By the Trail of Dead at the Opera House
- October 25th — Le Tigre with Gravy Train at the Opera House

Interview: The Walkmen

by Steffi Daft

The Walkmen are one of the best bands to come out of New York City in recent years, and they know it. Their journey to mini-cult-stardom has been long and arduous, and it's taken a lot of guts to stick out the vision with which they started the band. The boys have continually bounced back from pratfalls that could have easily sidelined bands of lesser mettle: three members of this band were in the underground-famous, Jonathan Fire* Eater, until that band imploded under the weight of the competing forces of critical praise, poor sales, too much hype, and a shoddy sophomore album that caused their label to drop them like so many bad apples. Now without a band, Matt Barriek (drums), Walter Martin (organs), and Paul Maroon (guitar) had to regroup. Walter enlisted his first cousin, Hamilton Leithauser, for vocals and eventually Hamilton recruited Peter Bauer from his old band, The Recoys. All five members grew up in Washington DC but eventually migrated to New York City with the purpose of starting a band. The guys rented some space in Harlem to practice and recorded their 2000 debut, *Everyone Who Pretended To Like Me Is Gone*, in that same rehearsal venue. Their contrasting sounds of tight, energetic live shows and sweeping, experimental recorded music have been gloriously reconciled in their new album, the gloriously dark, humorous, and creatively explorative record, *Bows and Arrows* (Record Collection). After garnering some excellent press, The Walkmen were set to embark on a summer o' fun with Lollapalooza to promote their record but, as we all know, that too broke down. Now, without a tour, the Walkmen once again picked up the pieces and started from scratch on a new, cross-America tour with a few stops in Canada. The Innis Herald spoke with the very tired, very funny, very awkward guitarist/pianist Paul Maroon about these and other experiences:



HERALD: The new record (*Bows and Arrows*) seems much more deliberate-sounding and confident than your other records. Does this reflect a new confidence in the band or your feelings when you were making it or...?

PAUL: We probably are more confident than before, and we're also more comfortable playing with each other.

HERALD: Do you find this to be a very experimental record?

PAUL: I think this record is a lot less experimental than the last one. I think we were afraid to do a lot more things this time around... which is probably a good thing.

H: How come?

P: Just because we weren't happy with the last records; there were some songs we didn't like.

H: Did you hold yourself up to higher expectations this time?

P: Yeah, we sorta knew better what the plan was and we didn't want to screw around as much as we did last time.

H: Do you think this is a moody record? I ask because your lead single is called "The Rat" and there seem to be a lot of questions posed in other songs that were just left hanging by the end...well, maybe it's not moody but it's definitely not trying to be happy.

P: I definitely don't think it's happy...we're not happy at all. We are a little angry; definitely, a little angrier here than the last one. But we're not really angry at anything in particular... I guess it's just kind of the mood of the music we make, I guess, infuriated rock. That's the style: infuriated rock.

H: Not to dredge up the past but I am going to because it seems hard not to: how is this band/record/song different from the music produced when you were in Jonathan Fire *Eater (JFE)?

P: I think we're a little bit more upset-sounding. JFE was a little bit more fun, in a weird way, even though it wasn't any fun at all. The lyrics were a little bit more about joking around, a little bit more campy, but this is definitely more of us being ourselves.

H: Because of your JFE experience, were you more inclined to go with your own feelings with your new band? Were you trying to be more commercially-inclined?

P: No, no we're not trying to be more commercially-inclined. We're not trying to write for anyone except ourselves, and we don't try to think about what other people would think about [the songs] at all. And we didn't expect to have any success so it's just dumb luck. When you start a band, you're not trying to be the coolest, you're just trying to do your best. And your best can come out sounding a little bit angry...it's probably just what we're best at.

H: Sorry, best at what?

P: Being angry.

H: Oh, well I guess everyone has a talent.

Insert nervous laughter from Herald and haughty, bored laughter from Paul.

H: Has the new dynamic contributed to this? Or just made you more creative?

P: Um, no...yes. I don't know. Our methods of songwriting have changed a little bit; it's less jam-my in that we don't all that to be in one room to write a song. But it's still pretty similar I guess. I don't know... I like it... I mean it's a lot more fun.

H: Do you have a new outlook on the music industry because of the other band?

P: No, we were very cynical about it in the first place and I think that we've remained very cynical about the music industry. And I can't imagine that would change.

H: But you guys were going to be a part of Lollapalooza before it collapsed, right?

P: Yeah...

H: And these mass-feeding-frenzy sort of festivals are an engine of the music industry... Why did you get involved with it? Were you just going along for the exposure?

P: We go along because we get told things like, "If you don't do this then your record is never going to be heard on commercial radio, and you're going to die a horrible death...in the south of Spain... in the middle of the desert... and your record will be burned." So we're like, "Alright, we'll go on Lollapalooza." It doesn't mean that we agreed that it would work so much as we just agreed to it.

H: Yeah... are you having more fun now that you're on tour with Modest Mouse?

P: Yeah we are, but we only played for like a week with them. Because we are really playing our own shows. We've been doing tons of driving...

Here, he inserts how many "miles" the band has been logging unawares that we in Canada do not follow this system and thus have no idea how much distance they've traveled.

P: ... and we love Toronto.

H: Well, Toronto loves you because your show is sold out.

This was an inadvertent lie because I had gotten the Walkmen's show confused with another gig that was confirmed to be sold out for the night before at the same venue; luckily, tons of people turned up for the event so I was telling the truth in the end.

P: Wow! That's amazing! We love Toronto.

H: Hey, are you aware that there's a Canadian band called The Watchmen?

P: NO! That's infuriating! Are they good?

H: No... in fact, it's funny because when I had mentioned to other people that I was going to interview "The Walkmen", most people looked taken aback and asked, "The Watchmen? WHY?" Is there any particular reason for The Walkmen?

P: Nah, out of the lip. We've regretted it. We wanted to be called The Sheep but our other suggestion of The Walkmen was more popular.

H: Oh, but you could've had so many good puns on The Sheep!

More nervous laughter and sighing... time to finish this interview.

H: OK, so I think that this is all I really wanted to ask you about!

P: Oh, wonderful!

H: Is there anything else you wanted to add or clarify?

P: No, I think that's fine by me if it's alright with you.

H: Alright, it's good with me.

P: OK cool, it was nice talking with you.

H: Yeah, you too. Good luck with the rest of your tour.

P: Bye.

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InnisHerald Arts & Entertainment

A Little Sex Appeal Does Not Go a Long Way: A Review of *This Is Our Youth* Berkley Street Theatre, 10 September, 2004

by Stephanie Silverman

Kenneth Lonergan is an astounding playwright who writes about deeply personal issues. His plays and some of his screenplays usually follow a group of 2 or more people as they slowly unravel and come back together into a new sort of equilibrium. In other words, Lonergan writes about deep, big issues affecting seemingly little, possibly emblematic, "typical" people. Indeed, even his screenplay for Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* focused on the personal side of the immigration dispute and this framing grounded an otherwise rambling narrative. Of course, like the warring factions in *Gangs*, Lonergan's people are usually hyperbolized versions of "reality"; however, this juxtaposition of "ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances" is usually milked to great success in Lonergan's work. For example, Lonergan wrote a play called *Waverley Gallery* that has been continually re-staged about a "feisty grandmother" in the last days of her battle against Alzheimer's that has a total of four characters. Another play that is so appealing that it is being re-mounted at an incredulous rate is *This Is Our Youth*, currently onstage at The Berkley Street Theatre in Toronto.

This Is Our Youth is Lonergan's first play and it is a look at three twentysomethings on the cusp of adulthood in New York City circa 1982. Dennis (Jason Lewis) is a wealthy, good-looking son of rich parents who substitute caring for him with providing him with rent. Warren (Marcello Cabezas) is Dennis's hanger-on who can't seem to get anything right. One day and the opening of the play, Warren shows up at Dennis's semi-squalid apartment with \$15,000 he stole from his father. The resulting plot follows Warren as he uses some of the money to woo the beautiful Jessica (Katherine Isabelle) and the complicated friendship between Warren and Dennis.

Warren and Dennis are supposed to be potheads and coke aficionados but this characteristic is poorly communicated by the actors: it seems that screaming lines at each other and

hitting each other is the substitute for an exploration of the kinetic, false energy that drug addiction provides and then eventually disables. I imagine that this frenzied direction is celebrity director Woody Harrelson's attempt to keep the audience's attention on the players while they go through the relentless post-

Market) reacts this way and that, in the earlier production featuring the fabulous Canadian Fabrizio Filippo, this physically-rigorous approach was well-demonstrated. Sadly, in the hands of the *Sex and the City* alumnus Lewis's hands, the screaming isn't annunciated enough and comes across as angry spattering. There's

also no nuance within the onslaught so the register of emotions is numbingly dull. Maybe if Lewis had lived up to his *Sexy* status and taken his shirt off, he would have provided the many gay men in the audience and me with at least a fleeting lowbrow pleasure. Cabezas is more adept at capturing the motive behind Harrelson's choice of frenzied acting, and his man-child Warren is much more convincing than Lewis's disaffected pretty-boy Dennis. As the fashion-forward but man-wary Jessica, *Ginger Snaps* co-star, Isabelle, puts in a competent performance as well.

As with any play, it is hard to capture a certain milieu resultant of a particular time and place, and Youth has succumbed to this disability. Granted, Lonergan's script is peppered with references to such 1980s New York obsessions like F.I.T. and JAPS (the Fashion Institute of Technology college in NYC, and Jewish American Princesses) that are hard to resituate in a new context and may not provoke the immediate imagery that would have been second nature to an audience watching the play in earlier years. Thus, the banter that is the mainstay of any Lonergan-penned piece is relegated to background noise in the exploration of *Youth's* greater themes of parental estrangement, coming-of-age, and adapting to an adulthood in the materialistic 1960s after a childhood in the idealistic 1960s; however, these flashes of zeitgeist are screamed and literally beaten into the characters by one another so it's hard to say if it is a case of miscommunication or poor writing. Harrelson and his ensemble

put in a good effort in this original approach to the material, but unfortunately the resulting effect with this cast is bland where it should be vibrant, and dull where *Youth* is edgy.

THIS IS OUR YOUTH BY KENNETH LONERGAN

university verbal garbage that most of us spew in our mid-20s. I also imagine that Harrelson (a pothead himself who has been recently spotted rocking the gang at Roach-a-Rama in Kensington

We Will Rock (Paper, Scissors) You!!!

by Erin Rodgers

Ahhh, rock, paper scissors. One of my favorite games in the playground, on car trips and on school bus rides. Well a favorite after "punch the crap out of the kid next to you when you see a VW Beetle", "sing a song until you drive your parents crazy" and, of course, "attempt to force the bus driver into a mental breakdown." As I am now an adult (well at least that's what I am told), the pool of people willing to take me on in a fight to the death game of rock, paper, scissors has dwindled considerably. Apparently people think that beyond a device to determine who will pick up the beer tab, that rock, paper scissors

is in the realm of the immature. Fortunately, there is a growing group of people who disagree (na na na-boo booh). Yes indeed, our fair city is the home to the World Rock Paper Scissors Society (RPS), a fact I discovered while browsing through the Toronto tourism guide on my regular lookout for anything free. At first thought this was some kind of hilarious misprint, or the negative effect on my reporterly senses of a lack of sleep, mixed with a fondness for liquid intoxicants. However, I decided to investigate, and discovered that this group does indeed exist. They are, in their own words: dedicated to the promotion of Rock Paper Scissors as a fun and safe way to resolve disputes. [They] feel that conserving the roots of RPS is essential for the growth and development of the game and the players.

The World RPS Society is involved in many areas of the sport, such as; research studies, workshops, tournaments at

both local and international levels, book publishing, and much more. While this all interesting, I wanted to get to the bottom of the popularity of the group, I soon got my answer. After a call to Mr. Douglas Walker, the managing director of this organization, I discovered that the crux of the organization is the annual Rock, Paper, Scissors World Championships, at Kool Haus October 16th at 7:30 in which the winner receives \$10,000. Just imagine all the macaroni and cheese that could buy. Now, I know what you are saying, "Erin this sounds like a joke, is The Herald having me on? Is this like the time you told me that everyone who got up in class the first week and sang Broadway show tunes got res. points, and then you laughed at me when I did it?" The answer is no (and that I

still can't believe that you actually took me seriously about that show tunes thing). In fact the competition is quite serious.

Teams do indeed come from all over, such as SPaStIC(sic), a group of Irishmen who have created their own offshoot committee in Ireland (<http://www.spastic.com.2.info/>) The World RPS Society (<http://www.worldrps.com>) even features a link to a group that has created their own religion based on Roshambo (another word for RPS) (<http://www.emf.net/%7Fceesteph/roshambo/>)

Even everyone's favorite drunken gas-guzzler Ralph Klein is a supporter of the games, as is Calgary's mayor, Dave Bronconnier. The Premier wishes to extend his best wishes for success at the 2004 Rock Paper Scissors World Championships in Toronto on October 16, 2004. Premier Ralph Klein, Alberta... I commend you for your commitment and effort in preparing for this unique international event. I am confident the calibre of play during the competition will be exceptional. Good luck and I hope to see you bring the Championship crown back to Calgary. All in all it looks to be a fun event, though perhaps at \$21.00 little beyond the average student budget. But, come on, you can forego beer for one night for the chance at \$10,000 right? Besides I can't wait to see you rocked by my secret dynamite, nuclear bomb moves. (Editor's note, these are not legal rock, paper, scissors moves...cheater!)



An Introduction by Joel Elliot

Criticism has a tendency – particularly in the ‘popular’ arts of music and film, but even in theatre, painting, etc. – to be severely restrained by self-contained arguments; self-perpetuating monologues which are also often embarrassingly separate from the art form in discussion. The problem of recording history as it happens can be generalized to all types of media: cultural phenomena are ‘covered’, and the coverage develops its own conventions and biases, and operates according to rules intrinsic to the given medium employed. In most cases, recorded history gives the illusion of continuity despite its fragmentation: its images and texts are as familiar as the objective world; which itself is so bombarded with representations that it becomes hard to tell the difference anyway. Nevertheless, so long as media makes direct reference to something in the real world, it always remains merely an icon; we trace the history of these images and texts as they run parallel to the people, places, and events themselves.

Art is unique among the possible subjects for media coverage, in that it involves a conscious creative process from the outset. The creative element in this form of journalism is found in the journalistic topic itself, and thus the possibility for convergence and mutual influence is far more profound. Unfortunately, in the case of cinema, the critical paradigm is still too often limited to convention: most notably, in what I call the “sound-bite phenomenon”. This is an effect created by the snippets of film reviews used in trailers for the film after its release. When you think about it, these sound bites, as irrelevant as they may seem at first, are probably the most prolific form of direct translation of the written word to television. This overabundance seems to have affected the criticism itself: some of the more popular film reviews sound like they should be read by that deep booming voice that does all the trailers; full of clichéd one-liners just begging to be quoted. Beyond robbing journalists of their integrity, this form of writing is prima-

rily dishonest; hyperbole is one thing, but sometimes film reviewers seem to be using words which don’t describe the experience of watching the particular film in question at all.

So after some brief food for thought, here is the film section. This month is a great time to give a proper introduction, because the Toronto International Film Festival has just rolled by in the past few weeks. As I’m writing this, the festival has just gotten underway, and you might have noticed if you were following closely that it’s hard to get more than a paragraph or two of information on any given film. Of course, if we published longer reviews on all the films at the Festival, we’d have a small novel. Hopefully, however, this month’s articles will provide a decent cross-section of some of the films which hit our small town over ten sleepless days. Also included are some films which have hit theatres around here, either at the end of the summer or beginning of fall.

9 Songs by Joel Elliot

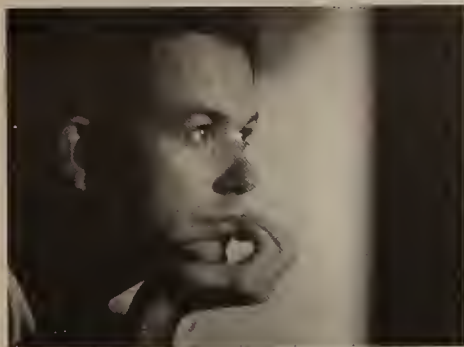
Francois Truffaut apparently said once that “there’s no such thing as British cinema”. As arrogant as it sounds, Britain has always lagged far behind countries like France, Germany and Italy; and has even had trouble keeping up with countries with seemingly less resources for prolific film, like Canada, Denmark, Sweden and the Czech Republic. It becomes even more difficult to find British film that doesn’t rely mostly on humour, or framed by epic proportions. In short, British film seems a lot more likely to rely on something overt or expansive, rather than subtle or reductionist techniques.

Then there’s Michael Winterbottom. And there’s *9 Songs*, perhaps a throwback to that short-lived British cinematic movement called ‘kitchen sink’ film, where small people live out their small lives. And *9 Songs* is a small film. Running only 65 minutes, it barely surpasses the ‘short film’ status, and it never really goes beyond its two characters; choosing instead to adopt the position that familiarity breeds intimacy. And that’s a pretty surprising effect from a film whose principle topics are sex, arena rock, and...uh...Antarctica. But there are very basic, familiar sensations to all three domains, which the film moves between with the mix of naivete and nostalgia found in childhood photographs.

The establishing framework of *9 Songs* is, interestingly enough, the rockumentary: a series of bands perform intermittently throughout the film, while the couple watch from the audience. The performers include Primal Scream, the Dandy Warhols, Franz Ferdinand, and even – with a beautiful solo piano piece – Michael Nyman. Most notably though, this isn’t just two characters who go to concerts; it proceeds like some kind of music festival documentary where a band plays

an entire song, and then a cut to backstage footage. Only in this case the backstage is that of one random young couple from the audience rather than the actual performers. There’s really not much substance: they fuck, and go to shows, and occasionally they dapple in some S&M, but that’s about it.

With such a straightforward plodline, the primary content often gets overtaken by the secondary or background material; that



Then there’s Michael Winterbottom...

is to say, the film becomes more about the shadows and dim light on their bodies, contrasted with bright stage lights and audio/tactile indulgences. Winterbottom takes up the Nietzschean proposition that surfaces may in fact be more substantial than depth, and takes this perspective to a climax with one of the character’s periodic reflections on his experience of the vast glaciers of the arctic. The words ‘void’ and ‘emptiness’ come up in clever moments. Although I have to say, if this is nihilism, then it’s never looked quite so beautiful. A side effect of this treatment is that the hardcore scenes have the potential to be more arousing than 99% of films made purely for that reason.

Like a lot of the films in the TIFF’s ‘Visions’ category, *9 Songs* has something incredibly interesting and original to offer, if you give it time to work its experiments on you. Miles away from the ridiculous controversy over what distinguishes art from pornography, Winterbottom’s new film could be the best thing I saw at this year’s festival.

Sunrise, Sunset Richard Linklater’s new conversation piece is nothing short of stunning by Joel Elliot

If Richard Linklater is a café filmmaker, then *Waking Life* is a double-tall mocha latte, and his new film, *Before Sunset*, is black coffee with chain-smoked cigarettes. A sequel to *Before Sunrise* (1995), Jesse and Celine (Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy) pick up where they left off 9 years before in Vienna, this time in Paris where Jesse gives a small press conference on a ‘fictional’ book he wrote which basically recounts their experience the last time around. The film is a stripped-down 90 minute reunion done entirely in real time: the exact time which they have together before Jesse has to leave to catch his plane.

The most notable dynamic between the two is a complete lack of the narcissistic sexual tension which plagues most cinematic romances, while at the same time, a focussed sense of urgency which is driven by the energy they give off. It seems like a paradox, but it’s more like, ‘Hey, we only have an hour and a half together, but we can’t ruin that by worrying about it, so let’s just chill, ok?’ Welcome to the coffee break of your lives, ladies and gentlemen.

Linklater’s films are as much, if not more, sociological examinations than philosophical manifestoes; his insight into mid-1970’s youth culture in *Dazed and Confused* and early-90’s youth culture in *Suburbia* is carried on in his later work. Anyone who thought *Waking Life* was merely a platform for philosophical ideas has obviously never gone on a psilocybin trip, because it really comes across more as the point of convergence between modern intellectual and drug cultures, done with stereoscopic precision, of course (‘3-D glasses’ sold separately). Likewise, *Before Sunset* is not as much about the ideas it presents, as the dynamics of conversation: the topics move progressively from political to inter-personal to deeply intimate, with an ending which culminates in the most life-affirming and honest confessionals that cinema has seen since *The Bicycle Thief*.

This isn’t to say that the film doesn’t contain any fantasy in it; conversely, the desire of the two characters is incredibly strong, and even more so for being allowed to play itself out. When the camera never leaves the characters – following them closely as they walk through the streets of Paris – the development of their relationship seems all the more plausible. It doesn’t hurt that Ethan Hawke comes off as a hopeless romantic who is completely comfortable with his shortcomings, and Julie Delpy plays a sexy French environmental activist (her overdue tribute to Nina Simone makes the film worth watching in itself) with a habit of falling into blatantly honest sensuality.

Under the surface, *Before Sunset* is even a recap of the last decade in cultural history. Near the beginning, the couple discuss whether times are better than before, and Linklater makes an interesting point: we’ve become so accustomed to globalization over this span of time that we assume our consciousness of it has somehow put a leash on it. Perhaps we’ve also forgotten what human relationships are about: desire, communication and personal development, and this film defiantly re-asserts all of these facets at once.



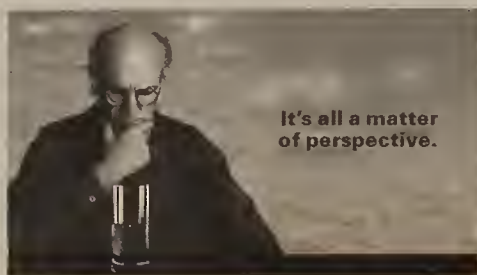
Curb Your Enthusiasm – Season Two (HBO)

by Erin Rodgers

Like most other people, I watch television for fun. You turn it on, people appear, you see something funny, you see something amazing; above all you see things that make you want to keep watching. This is television's main purpose. It wants to hook you in, keep you watching, and then show you things to buy. I'm sure grad students worldwide are toiling away on various more complex versions of that idea right now. However, once in a while there is a show that actually seems to dare you to watch it. The protagonist is perhaps not the most likeable character. In fact, he/she may be obnoxious. You alternate between squirming uncomfortably in your seat and covering your eyes, and laughing your ass off.

Curb Your Enthusiasm is that rare show. The most common way to introduce *Curb* is to mention that Larry David, the main "character" is the co-creator of *Seinfeld*. However, to simply pigeonhole it as the 'new Seinfeld' does it a great disservice. For you film geeks — and this is a college full of us — it has a real documentary/Cinema Verite feel. Writers are always given the advice to write what you know and Larry seems to know himself best. Part of what makes the show unique is the feel that it is completely real, and a great deal of the show is improvised. When one of the characters says something funny, another character laughs genuinely, likely because the joke was not scripted. Now when was the last time a show's characters talked and reacted like real people?

Seinfeld ended with the four main characters locked in a jail cell, being tormented by those they had wronged through the course of the show. While there was a great deal of discussion



around the ending, arguably it makes sense to see these four characters, who were at their roots selfish "bad people", get their just desserts. However, as those characters are just that, you can separate yourself from them. A big part of the fun in *Seinfeld* was that the situations were exaggerated to a level that meant the viewer didn't have to identify with the character. In *Curb*, if you have not been warned prior to watching the show, you could possibly think it was some sort of documentary. There is the above-mentioned style of camera-work and, to strengthen the illusion, the "characters" often have the real names of the actors who portray them. The result of these factors is that you can't help but be sucked into the show. Very few people have, say, developed a nasty rash on your genitalia from hiding a doll's head in your pants (don't ask), but you can't help but relate to times when you have lied for no good reason and got caught, or had a little white lie grow out of control.

I have only two complaints about this DVD. One, there seem to be no extras, or at least none that my little technophobe self can find. Two, because I have watched these episodes so much since I bought this DVD I feel like I'm living inside the show, though granted as a broke student with no celebrity friends version. Every time I do or say something stupid or I get into a weird argument with someone I hear the "ba ba ba ba" theme music playing in my head. The above is definitely an annoyance, and the lack of extras on a DVD is something that would normally cause me to cry "tip off". However, this show seems to disprove one of my most long held theses: that Richard Lewis IS NOT FUNNY, and because of this, I will forgive it these sins.

The Sea Within ("Mar Adentro")

by Qing Hua Wang



What makes life worth living? Is intellectual freedom enough to overcome the lack of physical freedom? Does loving someone mean improving his life or helping him die? These are some of the questions explored in *The Sea Within* ("Mar Adentro"), a fictionalized account of Ramón Sampedro's efforts to obtain legal authorization for euthanasia. Director Alejandro Amenábar's portrayal of the final stages of Ramón's life, as well as the impact it has on those around him, is both moving and thought-provoking.

Ramón (Javier Bardem) is a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down. A diving accident in his youth crippled him, forcing him to be entirely dependent on his family. He lives with his brother José (Celso Bugallo), whose wife Manuela (Mabel Rivera) is Ramón's devoted caregiver. Ramón's father Joaquín (Joan Dalmáu) and nephew Javi (Tamar Novas) build clever devices to help him, including a mechanized easel that allows him to write by holding a pen in his mouth. Ramón reads and writes extensively, listens to music, and has lively discussion with his many friends who visit him. But Ramón is dissatisfied with his limited existence. He deliberately and lucidly chooses to die; for him, "life is a fight, not an obligation."

The story in the film begins when Ramón is introduced to Julia (Belén Rueda), a lawyer who has agreed to take on Ramón's case before the courts to argue for legalizing his assisted suicide. As Julia gathers more information for the case by talking to Ramón and sifting through his writings and photographs, we learn more about Ramón's past and his reasons for wanting death. We eventually learn that Julia suffers from a degenerative disease that makes her prone to strokes, leading to ever-increasing paralysis. As she and Ramón grow closer, comparisons between their lives inevitably emerge.

Bardem's performance is understated yet astonishing, even though it occurs primarily from the neck up. He conveys readily Ramón's obvious enjoyment in intellectual and emotional debates, with wry observations and one-liners. "Once in a while," Ramón says to Julia about smoking, "just in case it kills me." Bardem easily shifts too to Ramón's ever-present sadness. He knows he will never walk again, or dive and swim in the ocean that he so loved as a young man. The supporting portrayals are also strong, from Rivera's strained devotion to Bugallo's desperate resentment.

Amenábar wisely lets Bardem's impressive performance and the lush Spanish landscape carry the film. The emotional impact is derived from the relationships between characters, not from any external effects of the camera, with the only liberties taken in Ramón's fantasy sequences, where he imagines himself flying over the verdant hills and across the glittering ocean, roving in his mind where his body will never again venture.

The Sea Within is a well-crafted film with memorable characters and exceptional performances. When Ramón ultimately receives his wish (this is not a spoiler, since the events portrayed in the film occurred in reality in 1998), the audience is genuinely affected by his departure, but at the same time glad that he finally got what he wanted and has fought so long to achieve.

Ten Word Movie Reviews: Summer 2004

by Daniel B. Field

Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy

An extended SNL sketch; Ferrell was funny, everyone else sucked.

The Bourne Supremacy

Unmemorable; plot was thin and the camerawork made me nauseous.

Collateral

Good acting, but very slow and too many implausible situations.

Fahrenheit 9/11

Obnoxious, but served a decent purpose. Moore becomes very manipulative.

Festival Express

Truly enjoy, able and exhilarating look at post-Woodstock traveling music festival.

Garden State

Impressive debut. Great soundtrack and acting, plus very memorable scenes.

Napoleon Dynamite

Sweetest film of summer. Best nerd movie ever? Heck yes.

Saddest Music In The World

Incredible; bizarre and uniquely Canadian. Daring and provocative. Funny too.

Saved!

High expectations saw poor results: tepid jokes and lame clichés.

Shrek 2

Was funny, but not as good as the first Shrek.

Spider-Man 2

Kicked more ass than all other comic book movies combined.

Super Size Me

Surprise! McDonalds is bad to eat for 30 days straight.

The Terminal

Awfully flat, surprisingly low quality even for Hanks and Spielberg.

The Village

I didn't see it - I heard ending was huge cop-out.

Napolean Dynamite

by Nicole Polivka

Remember that nerd from high school? You know, the tall lanky kid with the glasses? The kid whose social discomfort meant that hilarity ensued as soon as his back was turned? The kid whose bodily movements were so awkward that not only gym, but walking itself was a total disaster for him? The kid who lived in some sort of fantasy world that made him destined to designate himself Zabarra the All-Powerful in a role-playing game? That kid who was such a nerd that he was almost unreal, like he'd stepped right out of a movie? That kid and that movie is *Napolean Dynamite*. All the funny — the not-on-purpose-funny — things that you saw that kid do, all those awkward quirks you laughed at with a twinge of guilt — they caught it all on screen. And it's awesome. It's awesome because he is every nerd kid you knew in real life rolled into one skinny orange ball.



of them and not appreciating their own unique awesomeness. Or maybe you were that nerd and you totally relate. Either way, you love *Napolean* because he's a nerd.

You know he won't grow up to be hot and come back on Maury Povich and shake his hot ass in the face of the girl who rejected him.

And that's perfectly all right. Because this movie is not one of those teen movies where the only way the out-cast fits in is by becoming just like everybody else at the end, where the outsider becomes the Cinderella of the ball and suddenly everybody loves him because he's just as beautiful and normal as everybody else. This movie celebrates the wonder that is the nerd kingdom, and you're happy that *Napolean Dynamite* is not going to pull any of that talk show "Look-at-me-now" crap. You're happy because *Napolean Dynamite* is *Napolean Dynamite*. And he's

awkward but awesome, just like you. And it makes you want to watch this movie again right after you see it, and again after that, and on Sunday afternoons when it's raining, and on days when you just need something that will make you feel good. It's not amazing; it's not life changing; it's just plain and pure and simple and good and real and funny. So go laugh and stop feeling guilty about laughing at the nerds, because now you're no longer laughing at them, you're laughing because you love them, just like you'll love this movie.

Primer

Review by Joel Elliot

Primer is one of those films that seems to evade criticism. On one hand it's full of as much bad judgement as its befallen protagonists, who engineer a machine which sends them back into the past, leaving clones of themselves in place during the present (I think that's what happens). On the other hand, it's so ambitious and challenging in its style and philosophical inquiry that it ends up being one of the most intense and affecting sci-fi thrillers in years. Sure, it had its predecessors: Kubrick, Tarkovsky, or Ridley Scott may come to mind, but none of these directors ever made a film that could've passed the *Dogma* manifesto, not to mention a film so mind-blowingly incomprehensible. It actually reached me on an incredibly visceral level, that I left the theatre a mess of agitated paranoia. I still haven't decided whether that sensation was due to frustration at the conceptual points I couldn't grasp, or amazement at the hints of brilliance present.

So I'm stumped. No matter what way you approach this you end up sounding like a fucking idiot; even the more educated sci-fi nerds will only be shitting themselves if they think they can approach this from the point of view of actually fully comprehending its content. Shane Carruth built his feature film debut on a few thousand dollars and a hell of a lot of ideas based on his career as a computer scientist and mathematician. Beyond the theoretical mountain inherent in the content itself, the film is carried out with some incredibly enigmatic narrative structure. At the very beginning, we join four scientists working on some kind of invention, and already they're too far along to reveal what's going on; the viewer will

remain in this state of complete disorientation for at least the first half-hour. Some revelation begins to accumulate after that, but not in the 'explain it to me like I'm four' fashion, but in the 'eavesdropping at NASA' fashion. The former structure is so consistently applied to complex narratives — even in the more intelligent suspense films — that it rarely becomes noticeable; that is until a film like *Primer*, whose characters so consistently ignore the camera that the result looks like some bizarre documentary-style outsider art from another planet.

Shane Carruth joins the ranks of the Coen Brothers and Todd Solondz, both of whose feature debuts also won the top prize at Sundance (*Blood Simple* and *Welcome to the Dollhouse*). Unlike these filmmakers, however, Carruth could have convincingly spent his entire life in a lab, never seeing a film; this would explain both the radically unconventional storytelling, and the conviction with which his characters discuss something only they understand. The clues which unravel the plot come at such unexpected times, and with such little climax or circumstance, that it's easy to miss them: the first time one of them mentions something about a 'double' I was sure I'd heard wrong. It would be



Director Shane Carruth won the Grand Jury Drama Prize for *Primer* at the last Sundance.

almost just as well, upon first viewing, to ignore the instinct for hermeneutic anger, and take the whole thing as a metaphor on the process of constructing life through the materiality of space and the causality of time; or a rigorous study on the language of science and the communication and ownership of ideas.

Saw

Review by Joel Elliot

James Wan hadn't even graduated from film school when he began working on the screenplay for *Saw* with his buddy Leigh Whannell. Featured as the closing night presentation for the TIFF's 'Midnight Madness' at the Ryerson Theatre, I had to laugh when I heard the young Australian director say that it was originally conceived as a low-budget horror film. The fact is, the result was anything but minimalist: a mix between a macabre genre piece and an incredibly fast-paced downward spiral suspense film, it could even be described as excessive. That is, if it wasn't so damned good.

Saw is pure exploitation, and as a result sheds the often failed attempts at pseudo-integrity which plagues much of the more serious end of the horror genre. I use the word 'serious' dubiously, referring to the fact that it tends to be more terrifying than funny; the film luckily avoids the sombre tone and morally convoluted musings of comparable works like *Seven* and *Cube*, while still being 10 times darker and scarier than both. These two films, in fact, provide a great frame of reference: didn't you ever wish that the killer in *Seven* was actually present in the film, toying around with his victims? Or didn't you wish that *Cube* would stop with its cerebral head-bashing and force its victims fully into the primal arena? Well here is the answer: the focus of *Saw* is a demented killer who forces his victims to navigate through various puzzles which either involve excruciating pain,



or moral crises, or both, in order to — wait for it — make them "be grateful to be alive". Luckily, the moral origins of the scenario are only implicit: it only matters that the killer is unjustifiably psychotic, and feeling grateful to be alive at the end is an affect achieved not by a philosophically rich, but a viscerally wrenching film.

It starts out with two strangers who wake up chained at either end of a large bathroom with a corpse in the middle of them. They quickly discover two saws at their disposal, as well as their own personal tapes, which tell one of them he has to kill the other by 6 pm, or his wife and daughter will die. The film traces back to a cop obsessed with the case (played by Danny Glover), and we get a chance to witness some of the other victims in the ongoing series. These scenes are way too delicious to completely disclose, but here's a little peek: the only victim to survive was a girl who woke up with a metal device locked onto her face, which she is shown via videotape will rip apart her jaw when the timer runs out. There is, however, a key to this contraption, but it happens to lie in the stomach of her dead cellmate; who, it turns out, isn't actually dead. She manages to get the key in the quickest way possible, and it's one hell of a mess.

Sure, films like *Saw* have been made before, but doing it right is what the whole notion of genre is about. And after so many years of every possible topic in horror covered to the point of exhaustion, a good film recognizes its influences, and inherently comments on the genre itself. This has the making of a cult film: hell, I googled 'saw' and came up with 27.5 million web pages. That's not just a cult, that's a fucking continent.

There is something philosophically, and even narratively concrete here that could make *The Matrix* look like a tedious allegory (which it is, people, come on), but it's so difficult to get at it, and the result is incredibly frustrating. Regardless of the success of this film, however, it deserves recognition as one of the most innovative and original films of the festival.

A political cartoon

by Jared Michael Byer



Damn, that's a big Scaffold!

[Signature]

It's been going in and out of style



Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Bandana

[Signature]



The Adventures of Cyborg PowerTool Monkey on Fire n' Friends by Jared Michael Byer

